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ABSTRACT

This study compares ABI/INFORM and Wilson Business Abstracts in order to determine user preference. Surveys in the form of questionnaires were used to evaluate users' preference of interface, database response time, search results and ease of use with both business CD-ROM databases. Kent State University students, faculty, and patrons interested in either business database were asked to participate as well as on-site users of the business databases. Questionnaires were collected anonymously at the reference desk and were subjected to descriptive statistical analysis (e.g., frequencies, percentages, and chi square relationships). Overall the ABI/INFORM database was preferred because of more complete records and indexing more journal titles. When a library can afford only one business CD-ROM, ABI/INFORM should be considered because of its good all around coverage. The survey instrument is appended. (Contains 31 references.) (Author/TMK)

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ABI/INFORM AND WILSON BUSINESS ABSTRACTS: A COMPARISON

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library and Information Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Sheri A. Stout

November, 1993

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Master's Research Paper by

Sheri A. Stout

B.A., The College of Wooster, 1992

M.L.I.S., Kent State University, 1993

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Current and future trends in libraries forecast a continuing increase in the concentration on computer technology. The past twenty years have seen a dramatic increase in technology within libraries through online searching, CD-ROM databases, OPACs (Online Public Access Catalogs), and automation. As technology advances, there are more and more demands on libraries and librarians to provide access to this technology and for librarians to be knowledgeable about technology usage. A variety of constantly improving technology along with similar products from different vendors is available to add to librarians' difficulty in selection. Not only do librarians need to be knowledgeable for their own positions and duties, but librarians often must teach patrons how to use the available technology. Librarians must educate themselves about the wide array of available technology as well as how to use technology effectively so they can not only find information quickly and with sophistication, but they can also teach users to do so. Library users are becoming even more demanding about fast and immediate delivery of information and librarians need to be able to provide resources that are easy to use, quick to respond, and provide the needed information.

With the current demands of library users it is essential for librarians to be able to use research articles and studies in order to learn more about how to use the available technology, how to compare one resource to another, and to be aware of the cost differentiation between vendors who provide similar products.

Statement of the Problem

One of the major areas of technological and fast information access interest is CD-ROM products. Dealing with tight budgets, librarians need to be

knowledgeable about the products that are available and the strategies for selection of computer resources and between products, including CD-ROMs. Computer database technology is still relatively new to libraries and it is important to perform research to assist libraries in evaluating products, particularly CD-ROMs, for purchase. Library professionals need more research that compares CD-ROMs, particularly in the area of business. Research on the ERIC, Medline, and MLA Bibliography CD-ROMs is helpful but often does not compare the products.

It is also important to have user studies to determine user needs and usage patterns of CD-ROM technology. It is difficult, if not impossible, to select and maintain CD-ROM and other products if it is unknown how users respond and interact with technology, particularly constantly changing and improving technology. CD-ROMs are expensive and librarians should not go into the evaluation and selection process blindly. More research on CD-ROM product comparisons would assist librarians in deciding about purchase, continuance and/or cancellation of CD-ROM subscriptions. These studies would provide statistics and written responses for librarians to consult prior to embarking on an expensive and often long-term proposition. Users' response is also important in order to evaluate what users want and to enable libraries to provide it.

ABI/INFORM and Wilson Business Abstracts are two business CD-ROMs. They allow users to search for citations and abstracts to journal articles on specific topics related to the business field. ABI/INFORM is a UMI (University of Microfilms International) product while Wilson Business Abstracts is an H. W. Wilson Company product. The Wilson Business Abstracts disc available at the time of this study included the years 1982-present (1992) while the ABI/INFORM disc covered 1989-present (1992). The ABI/INFORM database goes back to 1971 but at the time of the survey only the four year coverage was available.

(OhioLINK allows access back to 1971.) ABI/INFORM is $4950 per year compared to Wilson Business Abstract's cost of $2495. Both databases are updated monthly.

ABI/INFORM has always been a bibliographic database that includes abstracts while Wilson Business Abstracts has only included abstracts since 1990. Both databases have the capacity for keyword searching, Boolean logic, search statement retention and back referencing, field searching, proximity searching, printing, downloading, truncation, automatic searching of singular and plural, nesting, and library holdings display. Library holdings display is not available at Kent State University. ABI/INFORM also has index searching and varied display format capabilities. Wilson Business Abstracts has the unique options of thesaurus, online updating, novice search mode and search saving. Although there is a great deal of overlap of periodicals indexed, Wilson Business Abstracts indexes 82 unique titles and ABI/INFORM indexes over 500 unique titles.

Although there are articles addressing the selection of electronic products, including a few CD-ROMs, and articles about specific CD-ROM products, there is very little literature about the actual comparison of CD-ROM products. The lack of research could indicate that either librarians believe they own appropriate business indexes, libraries are not aware of the variety of business CD-ROMs available, or that libraries already prefer one of the business CD-ROM products.

The void in the literature on CD-ROM comparison is disturbing and needs to be remedied. Research on this topic would help determine user needs and preferences as well as assist librarians in selection. The future of libraries depends upon research and user analysis studies of technology so

that libraries do not lag behind or lack resources in the ever-increasing demand for fast and accurate access to information.

Purpose of the Study

This study is a comparison of two CD-ROM business databases, ABI/INFORM and Wilson Business Abstracts. The purpose is to better prepare librarians to make more educated decisions about the evaluation and purchase of CD-ROMs, specifically these two business CD-ROM products.

Definitions of Terms

CD-ROM: 1) A plastic disk with a reflective metal coating that are read by a small laster (sic) beam. . . linked to personal computers CD-ROM have rapidly become a major publishing medium for distributing databases, directories and catalogues.[1] 2) Its function in a library setting is to enable access to journal articles and sometimes book chapters through use of subjects, keywords, or other information. A CD-ROM product is usually limited to a broad subject area (e.g., ERIC is an educational resources database). CD-ROM's advantages over other storage media include: resistance to scratches and warping because the read head does not touch the disc. They are also physically stronger than floppy discs.[2] The storage capacity of CD-ROMs is also impressive.

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[1]Ray, Prytherch, Harrod's Librarians' Glossary of Terms Used in Librarianship, Documentation and the Book Crafts and Reference Book, 7th ed., (Brookfield, VT: Gower Publishing Company, 1990), 114-115.

[2]Jean-Paul Emard, CD-ROMs in Print 1988-1989 an International Guide, (Westport, CT: Meckler Corporation, 1988), ix.

End User: "A person who ultimately desires, receives, and uses the information and related services provided through the use of an interactive retrieval system."[3] In this study end users are library patrons.

Online Searching: "A means whereby a searcher at a remote terminal can access and interrogate databases containing bibliographical or other data. . . The searcher accesses the database using a telecommunications link, and quoting a password to establish authenticity and facilitate billing."[4]

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to CD-ROM end users of the Kent State University Libraries and the findings are not necessarily applicable to CD-ROM end users in all library settings. Hereafter the term "user" is implied to mean end user. Due to time limitations this project compares only two CD-ROM products.

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[3]Charles R. Hildreth, Online Public Access Catalogs: The User Interface (Dublin, Ohio: OCLC, 1982) : 228.

[4]Prytherch, Harrod's, 448.

CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

CD-ROMs became commercially available in 1986.[5] For this paper the CD-ROM databases ERIC, LISA, Library Literature, and Information Science Abstracts were searched for pertinent research articles from 1986-1993.

There does seem to be more written about ABI/INFORM (in a variety of forms) than about any other business database. Unfortunately research on business CD-ROMs rarely discusses user preference. Because many articles discuss evaluations of specific CD-ROM products, the literature review will concentrate on evaluations of business CD-ROM products and studies that compare two or more CD-ROM products. Harrington examined Wilson Business Abstracts on CD-ROM.[6] He felt that Wilson Business Abstracts is very good because it provides various levels of access, thorough and consistent indexing and its documentation are among the best. However, for currency users need access to the online system option. Unfortunately, most libraries do not use the online feature, probably because of the expense.

Karp evaluated the ABI/INFORM database and reported on its span, functions, and features.[7] She provided the advantages and challenges for librarians as well as the benefits and problems for users. Karp found CD-ROM technology to be less expensive than online searching while retaining the high

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[5]Benedict Lo Bue, "CD-ROM and the End-User," Colorado Libraries 13 (December 1987) : 2 9-30.

[6]James P. Harrington, "Wilson Business Abstracts," CD-ROM Librarian 7, 3 (March 1992) : 39-44.

[7]Nancy S. Karp, "ABI/INFORM on CD-ROM: How Does the Disk Stack Up? National Online Meeting-1988: Proceedings of the 9th National Online Meeting, New York, May 10-12, 1988, 148.

quality of online searching. She said that students and librarians alike would find ABI/INFORM a useful reference tool.

Articles exist that compare how products function on different computer systems and through different formats. Spragg researched how ERIC on CD-ROM functions on the different systems of IBM and Macintosh and found while there were "no significant differences in search success. . .the majority of students preferred Macintosh's graphical user interface."[8]

Several journal articles compare one CD-ROM product from a variety of vendors. McLaughlin, Reese and Steffey examined the three versions of ERIC on CD-ROM: DIALOG Ondisc ERIC, OCLC Search CD450, and SilverPlatter ERIC. McLaughlin compared the contents, commands, and notable features of the three versions, while Reese and Steffey compared documentation, user support, along with displaying and printing results.[9][10] Halperin and Renfro examined MEDLINE and ABI/INFORM on laserdisk, commercial systems, and local time-sharing at the University of Pennsylvania libraries. They found that the three formats are "more complimentary than competing technologies and that librarians can justify having all formats available because of the differences in operation and cost."[11]

Most research on comparison of the ABI/INFORM database evaluates the online version, laserdisk version, or the CD-ROM version. Karp examined

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[8]Edwin B. Spragg, "CD-ROM Software Evaluation: Comparison of Searching ERIC on IBM and Macintosh," College and Research Libraries 53, 4 (July 1992) : 351.

[9]Pamela W. McLaughlin, "New Access Points to ERIC: CD-ROM Versions," Education Libraries 12, 3 (Fall 1987) : 73-76.

[10]Jean Reese and Ramona Steffey, "ERIC on CD-ROM: A Comparison of DIALOG Ondisc, OCLC's Search CD450 and SilverPlatter," Online 11, 5 (September 1987) : 42-54.

[11]Michael Halperin and Patricia Renfro, "Online vs. CD-ROM vs. Onsite: High Volume Searching--Considering the Alternatives," Online 12, 6 (November 1988) : 42.

ABI/INFORM on laserdisk versus online.[12] She compared usage, technology, and searching within both methods of access. She found students more likely to use the database than faculty due to the limited five-year coverage on the disc version. Karp also believed corporations would find ABI/INFORM on laserdisk out dated, since the information is usually at least three months old.

Browning and Haas surveyed the cost and use of Business Periodicals Ondisc, a CD-ROM product that links ABI/INFORM to full-text articles. Browning and Haas discussed the merits of full-text articles and options for funding the database in a library. Because the "ideal setting [for ABI/INFORM] is corporate libraries, large academic libraries with strong business programs" should subscribe to Business Periodicals Ondisc.[13]

Veccia discussed ABI/INFORM's history and compares access to the database through DIALOG, Nexis, and Dialcom.[14] She examined the searching, database design and features, file documentation, and cost through three sample searches. Veccia determined a preference for DIALOG because of its solid combination of cost, sophistication and search power. However, each library must determine its own needs and what it can afford.

There are studies comparing print and CD-ROM indexes. Reese compared the print "Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature" with InfoTrac II, a CD-ROM product and found the "Readers' Guide" to be more effective.[15] Peters

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[12]Nancy S. Karp, "ABI/INFORM on CD-ROM: A first look," Laserdisk Professional 1, 3 (May 1988) : 28-34.

[13]Marilyn M. Browning and Leslie M. Haas, "Is Business Periodicals Ondisc the Greatest Thing Since Sliced Bread?: A Cost Analysis and User Survey, CD-ROM Professional, 4, 1 (January 1991) : 41.

[14]Susan H. Veccia, "The Ubiquitous ABI/INFORM: Dialog, Nexis, Dialcom et al.," Database 10, 1 (February 1987) : 35-46.

[15]Carol Reese, "Manual Indexes Versus Computer-Aided Indexes: Comparing the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature to InfoTrac II," RQ 27, 3 (Spring 1988) : 384-389.

compared several CD-ROM databases with their print counterparts. He "suggests that the librarian should call such products [print versions] to the attention of users needing information available in CD-ROM format."[16] Schultz and Salomon examined CD-ROM and print versions of ERIC, PsycLit and the Business Periodicals Index. Students found the CD-ROMs to be faster and easier to use.[17]

There are a variety of user satisfaction studies. An example of a user satisfaction study of a specific vendor is the Harrington study of user satisfaction with ERIC and MEDLINE, two SilverPlatter products, at the University of Charleston.[18] Because a large percentage (70 respondents or 89%) of users wanted training on system that could be done on their own time, Harrington developed a computer-assisted instruction program and his article concentrates on his training program, "Searching SilverPlatter."

Allen studied patron response to and success in using CD-ROM databases to determine training needs and overall user satisfaction. "Patrons like to use CD-ROMs but are uncertain about their success in using these systems."[19] End-user studies of CD-ROM service at specific institutions include Steffey and Meyer's survey of users at Vanderbilt libraries on 20 CD-ROM

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[16]Charles Peters, "Databases on CD-ROM: Comparative Factors for Purchase," Electronic Library 5, 3 (June 1987) : 160.

[17]Kim Schultz and Kristine Salomon, "End Users Respond to CD-ROM," Library Journal 115, 2 (February 1, 1990) : 57.

[18]James Harrington, "Searching SilverPlatter: A Computer-Based CD-ROM Instruction Tool, CD-ROM Professional 3, 6 (November 1990) : 12-13,15.

[19]Gillian Allen, "Patron Response to Bibliographic Databases on CD-ROM," RQ 29, 1 (Fall 1989) : 110.

products.[20] They found that users were impressed with the products and would spread the word about CD-ROMs as well as use CD-ROMs again themselves. Jaffe compared InfoTrac's Magazine Index with the WILSONDISC products: Reader's Guide and Humanities Index at Sweet Briar College and found an undergraduate preference for "index-controlled access to multidisciplinary data" on CD-ROM.[21] The librarians recognize the need for Boolean strategies and hope that with use and/or instruction, undergraduate students will demand and welcome sophisticated search options.[22]

Another user study of CD-ROM databases was done by Bucknall and Mangrum at the University of Carolina at Chapel Hill. They examined experience levels, how users learned about the service, user satisfaction, preferred source of help and research strategies along with other characteristics. Findings include: patrons use CD-ROMs as their first source, are unlikely to use print indexes, and are highly satisfied with the search service.[23]

Comparison studies on CD-ROM products are limited in subject scope. Ernest and Lange compared InfoTrac on laserdisk and WILSONDISC on CD-ROM and found the products equally popular with users. They also found that "many users abandon print indexes when a computerized alternative

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[20]Ramona J. Steffey and Nikki Meyer, "Evaluating User Success and Satisfaction with CD-ROM," Laserdisk Professional 2, 5 (September 1989) : 35-45.

[21]John G. Jaffe, "For Undergraduates: InfoTrac Magazine Index Plus or WILSONDISC with Reader's Guide and Humanities Index?," American Libraries 19, 9 (October 1988) : 761.

[22]Jaffe, American Libraries 19, 9 (October 1988) : 761.

[23]Tim Bucknall and Rikki Magrum, "U-Search: A User Study of the CD-ROM Service at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill," RQ 31, 4 (Summer 1992) : 550.

appears."[24] Peritore compared LegalTrac's Legal Resources Index and WILSONDISC's Index to Legal Periodicals and determined that the advantages and disadvantages "may lead to conclusion that both are needed for thorough coverage, however, if only one is chosen, it will be the one best suited to a particular library's needs."[25]

King surveyed users of Medline and PsycLit at an academic medical library and found that the majority of graduate students from the schools of medicine, nursing, and pharmacy responded with similar results for both databases.[26] Tenopir and Smith compared several general interest CD-ROM products to assist librarians in choosing products appropriate for their users and suggested that librarians try out each product before making a final decision.[27] The vendors examined were EBSCO Electronic Information, H.W. Wilson Company, UMI, and Information Access Company.

There are remarkably few comparison studies on business CD-ROMs that discuss preference. Lipski examined and compared four business CD-ROMs: ABI/INFORM, Business Index, Business Periodicals Index and F & S Index Plus Text. ABI/INFORM was found to provide "good all around coverage of international business activities and issues; Predicasts contains facts and figures as well as full text for many of the articles; and Business Index and

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[24]Douglas J. Ernest and Holley R. Lange, "InfoTrac and WILSONDISC: A Comparison of New Technologies," Reference Services Review 17, 2 (1989) : 74.

[25]Laura Peritore, "LegalTrac and WILSONDISC: A Comparison," Legal Reference Services Quarterly 8, 3-4 (July-August 1988) : 243.

[26]Natalie Schock King, Sandra E. Goldstein, and Lesley A. Williams, "Medline and PsycLit on CD-ROM: A Survey of Users in an Academic Medical Library," Medical Reference Services Quarterly, 9, 1 (Spring 1990) : 56.

[27]Carol Tenopir and Timothy Ray Smith, "General Periodical Indexes on CD-ROM," CD-ROM Professional, 3, 4 (July 1990) : 70-81.

Business Periodicals Index are best suited to international business research at the undergraduate level.[28]"

Babcock compared databases which index business journals and databases with information on publicly owned companies. The following databases were included: Compact Disclosure, Moody's 5000 plus, Standard & Poor's Corporations, General Periodicals Index, Business Periodicals Index, and ABI/INFORM. Babcock feels the "future of the CD-ROM and the business researcher is very bright."[29]

An article by Ojala compared Business Periodicals Index and ABI/INFORM. Ojala found the process for journal selection the most significant difference. Wilson journals are chosen through subscriber vote while ABI/INFORM journals are chosen by the University of Microfilms International's editorial staff. In Ojala's conclusion she determined that while "cost may give an edge to BPI, the widespread availability of ABI/INFORM makes it more accessible."[30]

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[28]Alison J. Lipski, "Think Globally, Search Locally: International Business Information on Four CD-ROMs," CD-ROM Professional 5, 1 (January 1992) : 103.

[29]Warren E. Babcock, "Comparison of CD-ROM Business Databases," in National Online Meeting: Proceedings of the 10th National Online Meeting in New York, May 9-11, 1989, by Learned Information (Bedford, N.J.: Learned Information, 1989), 21.

[30]Marydee Porter Ojala, "Business Periodicals Index and ABI/INFORM," Database 10, 6 (December 1987) : 72.

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

This project used the survey method to examine user comparisons of ABI/INFORM and Wilson Business Abstracts CD-ROMs. The survey method enables compilation of anonymous user reaction to CD-ROM interfaces and to determine overall ease of CD-ROM use. The interfaces, commands, and search results of the two CD-ROMs are compared and evaluated. Questions were also asked about CD-ROM usage, experience, and familiarity with certain databases, what database(s) were in use, reason for use, assistance needs, time spent, computer used, response time, articles found and preference for database screens and commands. Tables are included to show response frequency and percentage.

This comparison of ABI/INFORM and Wilson Business Abstracts investigates user reaction to each database's interface, commands, ease of use, performance, search results, patron's frequency of use, and determines user attitude toward the two selected business CD-ROMs. The questionnaire asks patrons their gender, campus status, and whether not they are business majors to determine who is using the business CD-ROMs and if there are different reactions to the CD-ROM products dependent on the type of user (see Appendix A).

Questionnaires were also distributed to patrons using ABI/INFORM and Wilson Business Abstracts at the Kent State University reference desk in the reference center of the Library. Librarians requested users to use both databases. Questionnaires were collected anonymously at the reference desk and responses kept confidential.

CHAPTER IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

A total of 125 questionnaires was distributed to library users and 67 usable responses were returned. The response rate is 53.6 percent.

Users were asked demographic characteristics to determine if certain characteristics affected user preference. Slightly more than half the respondents are males (54.5%) and slightly more than half are undergraduates (56.7%). More than half (68%) are business majors, showing that more business majors use the databases than non-business majors. (see Table 1). A large percentage (58 respondents 86.6%) have used a CD-ROM previously; however, most respondents (43 respondents or 64.2%) use CD-ROMs less than

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristic N = 67	f	%
Gender		
Male	36	54.5
Female	30	45.5
Total	66	100.0
Status		
Undergraduate	38	56.7
Graduate	24	35.8
Faculty	2	3.0
Other	3	4.5
Total	67	100.0
Major		
Business	45	68.2
Other	21	31.8
Total	66	100.0

once per week. It is noteworthy that 11.9% use the CD-ROMs four or more times per week. Experience ratings are distributed among respondents with an equal number feeling they are beginners or moderate user levels (25 respondents or 37.9% each) while 24.2% (16 respondents) feel they are experienced CD-ROM users (see Table 2).

Table 2

CD-ROM Use Patterns of Respondents

Pattern N = 67	f	%
Used CD-ROM before		
Yes	58	86.6
No	9	13.4
Total	67	100.0
Frequency of CD-ROM Use		
Less than once per week	43	64.2
Once a week	13	19.4
2-3 times per week	3	4.5
4 or more times per week	8	11.9
Total	67	100.0
Perception of User Experience		
Beginner	25	37.9
Moderate	25	37.9
Experienced	16	24.2
Total	66	100.0

Most respondents (31 or 49.2%) discovered the databases with the assistance of a librarian. In most cases patrons asked reference questions requesting business or company information and were then told about the questionnaire. Staff members also requested users of the business databases to fill out the questionnaire after using both databases. The second most frequent way users found out about the databases (10 respondents or 15.9%

each) is a tie between class and friend. Other responses (5 respondents) comprise 7.9% of the answers. These later responses include: used CD-ROM previously (2 respondents or 3.17%), practice, on own, and luck (1 respondent or 1.59% each). The most frequent purpose stated is class assignment (37 respondents or 64.9%) while several (10 respondents or 17.5%) stated they were doing graduate research. Fifty-three users (81.5%) said they used the same keywords or search terms in their search. This is important because identical searches give a more accurate comparison of the databases. Only 7.7% of respondents said they do not know what keywords are and these users may have performed the same search without realizing it (see Table 3).

ABI/INFORM screen is easier to read according to 33 respondents (56.9%) and 31 respondents (50.8%) felt that ABI/INFORM has easier to understand commands. However, Wilson Business Abstract's screen is preferred by (20 respondents or 34.5%). Neither screen is preferred by very few (5 respondents or 8.6%) while neither commands are easier to understand for 14 respondents (23%). Unfortunately there is little response on the questionnaires to state the reason for confusion about commands and whether confusion exists. It may be that both databases' commands are easy to understand. Ease in use would also explain why few users make use of the help screens.

Many respondents do not find it necessary to use the help screens in either database (see Table 4). The high frequency of missing responses (15 respondents or 22.4%) to the use of Wilson Business Abstract's help screens may be due to the number of people who do not use the Wilson Business Abstracts database. The majority of respondents also do not ask for assistance with either database. It is uncertain whether respondents feel comfortable with both databases or if they feel uncomfortable asking questions. A large

Table 3

CD-ROM Database Information

Characteristic N = 67	f	%
Database in Use		
ABI/INFORM	30	46.9
Wilson Business Abstracts	2	3.1
Both	32	50.0
Total	66	100.0
User Discovery of CD-ROM		
Class	10	15.9
Friend	10	15.9
Librarian	31	49.2
Library Guide	7	11.1
Other	5	7.9
Total	63	100.0
Purpose for CD-ROM use		
Class Assignment	37	64.9
Graduate Research	10	17.5
Faculty Research	3	5.3
Job Information	4	7.0
Other	3	5.3
Total	57	100.0
Used Same Keywords/Search Terms		
Yes	53	81.5
No	7	10.8
Don't Know	5	7.7
Total	65	100.0

percentage of respondents does not feel they need assistance to find articles on ABI/INFORM or Wilson Business Abstracts (see Table 5). There is again the problem that 14 respondents (20.9%) answered the Wilson Business Abstracts

Table 4

Users Perceptions of Screens and Commands on Databases

Perception N = 67	f	%
Screen Easier to Read		
ABI/INFORM	33	56.9
Wilson Business Abstracts	20	34.5
Neither	5	8.6
Total	58	100.0
Commands Easier to Understand		
ABI/INFORM	31	50.8
Wilson Business Abstracts	16	26.2
Neither	14	23.0
Total	61	100.0
Used ABI/INFORM Help Screens		
Yes	24	36.9
No	41	63.1
Total	65	100.0
Used Wilson Business Abstracts Help Screens		
Yes	15	30.6
No	34	69.4
Total	49	100.0

based question. This may be due to respondents not using the database despite being requested to do so. It may be that users are satisfied with ABI/INFORM and did not feel it necessary to search Wilson Business Abstracts (see Table 4).

Nearly half (26 respondents or 40%) spent between 15 to 30 minutes on ABI/INFORM while most Wilson Abstracts users spent either less than 15 minutes (25 respondents or 43.1%) or 15 to 30 minutes (27 respondents or

Table 5

Users' Need for Assistance on Databases

Type of Assistance N = 67	f	%
Asked for ABI/INFORM Assistance		
Yes	18	28.1
No	46	71.9
Total	64	100.0
Ask for Wilson Business Abstracts Assistance		
Yes	11	21.2
No	41	78.8
Total	52	100.0
Feel Need Assistance on ABI/INFORM to Find Articles		
Yes	9	14.1
No	55	85.9
Total	64	100.0
Feel Need Assistance on Wilson Business Abstracts to Find Articles		
Yes	10	18.9
No	43	81.1
Total	53	100.0

46.6%). Very few users used Wilson Business Abstracts for 45 to 60+ minutes (6 respondents or 10.3%) while 26 users (40%) spent 45 to 60+ minutes on ABI/INFORM (see Table 6).

Users were asked which computer was used because during the time of this survey there were two types of computers in the Reference Center, Gateway 386 terminals and Zenith Data Systems 286 terminals. It was felt that the slower Zenith Data Systems terminals might skew responses, particularly for CD-ROM

Table 6

CD-ROM Users' Searching Time on Databases

Database Searching Time N = 67	f	%
ABI/INFORM		
Less than 15 minutes	13	20.0
15-30	26	40.0
45-60	18	27.7
More than 60 minutes	8	12.3
Total	65	100.0
Wilson Business Abstracts		
Less than 15 minutes	25	43.1
15-30	27	46.6
45-60	5	8.6
More than 60 minutes	1	1.7
Total	58	100.0

response time. Asking this question would show whether dissatisfaction with response time is caused by the slower machines or the databases themselves.

The slower machines were numbers 4, 5, and 7 in the Reference Center. There were also four slower machines in the adjacent instruction lab alcove near the computer center with numbers 53, 54, 55 and 56. None of the respondents reported using any of the slower Zenith Data Systems terminals in the lab by number. However, instead of responding with a number, one respondent said "B" on the survey in response to computer in use. The letter "B" is on the lab computers which share a printer with lab computers labeled "A." The respondent may have been on a slower terminal since one of the three "B" computers at the time of the survey was a slow computer. However, the fast responses for both ABI/INFORM and Wilson response time implies that the computer was a faster Gateway computer.

A total of eight respondents (13.3%) used the slower Zenith Data Systems terminals. Two of the eight respondents (25%) feel that both databases are slow; two respondents (25%) feel that ABI/INFORM is slow and did not respond to response time for Wilson Business Abstracts (implying that they did not use it); three respondents (37.5%) feel ABI/INFORM to be adequate while they feel Wilson Business Abstracts has either slow, adequate, or fast, respectively, response time; the other user (12.5%) did not respond. All but one user (12.5%) said that s/he had used a CD-ROM before and thus should be familiar with the speed of response, though depending on which terminal s/he used at the previous time, s/he may have higher or lower expectation. Table 7 gives the frequency and percentage of terminal use.

Table 7

CD-ROM Computer in Use

CD-ROM Computer No. N = 67	f	%
1	11	18.3
2	8	13.3
3	10	16.7
4	4	6.7
5	3	5.0
6	10	16.7
7	1	1.7
8	8	13.3
9	5	8.3
Total	60	100.0

The majority of respondents feel the database response time to be adequate for both CD-ROM databases. Four (18%) of the 22 respondents who said ABI/INFORM response time is slow were on the slower Zenith Data Systems 286 machines and three (42.9%) of the seven respondents who said

that Wilson Business Abstracts is slow were also on the slow machines. These slow responses are the fault of the machines and not the databases themselves. However, not including the four respondents (18%) on Zenith Data Systems machines, nearly one third of the respondents (22 respondents or 33.3%) feel that ABI/INFORM is slow in responding. Many respondents (10 respondents or 14.9%) did not specify Wilson Business Abstracts respond time and these may be respondents who do not use the database (see Table 8).

Table 8

CD-ROM Product Response Time

Perception of Database Response	N = 67	f	%
ABI/INFORM			
Slow		22	33.3
Adequate		37	56.1
Fast		7	10.6
Total		66	100.0
Wilson Business Abstracts			
Slow		7	12.3
Adequate		31	54.4
Fast		19	33.3
Total		57	100.0

Users were very successful identifying articles using ABI/INFORM (61 respondents or 93.8%) and only four respondents (6.2%) reported no articles found. Wilson Business Abstracts users were not quite as successful with only 38 respondents (74.5%) finding articles. Thirteen Wilson Business Abstracts users (25.5%) did not find journal articles in the Wilson database (see Table 9). Again there are several respondents who did not respond to the Wilson Business Abstracts related question and this may be due to use of only the ABI/INFORM database.

Table 9

User Success Finding Articles in CD-ROM

Database Success	N = 67	f	%
ABI/INFORM			
	Yes	61	93.8
	No	4	6.2
	Total	65	100.0
Wilson Business Abstracts			
	Yes	38	74.5
	No	13	25.5
	Total	51	100.0

Over ninety percent (61 respondents) indicated that they would use ABI/INFORM again and over 80% (41 respondents) said they would use Wilson Business Abstracts again. Two people (3%) did not respond about his/her willingness to use ABI/INFORM in the future while 18 people (26.9%) did not respond about their willingness to use the Wilson Business Abstracts database at a future time. The lack of response may be due to not using Wilson Business Abstracts for the comparison purposes of this survey and may imply that they would also not use the database at a later date.

Table 10

Willingness to Use CD-ROM Product Again

Future Database Use	N = 67	f	%
ABI/INFORM			
	Yes	61	92.4
	No	5	7.6
	Total	66	100.0
Wilson Business Abstracts			
	Yes	41	83.7
	No	8	16.3
	Total	49	100.0

A Chi Square analysis of the relationship between user discovery of CD-ROM and user's major was highly significant (Chi Square = 11.395; p = .022). Half of the users (31 respondents or 50%) including both business majors and other majors discovered the databases with the assistance of a librarian. Significantly more business majors (10 respondents or 16.13%) discovered the database with the help a friend than other majors (no respondents or 0%) did (see Table 11).

Table 11

Relationship between User Discovery of CD-ROM by User's Major

User Discovery of CD-ROM	User's Major: Business		Other		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Class	8	12.90	2	3.23	10	16.13
Friend	10	16.13	0	0.00	10	16.13
Librarian	18	29.03	13	20.97	31	50.00
Library Guide	6	9.68	1	1.61	7	11.29
Other	1	1.61	3	4.84	4	6.45
Total	43	69.35	19	30.65	62	100.00

Chi-square value = 11.395
p = .022
Df = 4
Sample size = 62

When the Chi Square test was conducted to analyze the variables of CD-ROM commands easier to understand and user's major, it was discovered that a significant relationship exists between these two variables (Chi Square = 10.903; p = .004). The majority of business majors and other majors (31

respondents or 50.82%) felt that the ABI/INFORM commands were easier to understand. However more business majors (14 respondents or 22.95%) felt that Wilson Business Abstracts was easier to understand. Significantly more business majors (13 respondents or 21.31%) than other majors (1 or 1.64%) felt the commands on both databases were equal (see Table 12).

Table 12

Relationship between CD-ROM Commands Easier to Understand by User's Major

Commands	User's Major					
	Business		Other		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
ABI/INFORM	16	26.23	15	24.59	31	50.82
Wilson Business Abstracts	14	22.95	2	3.28	16	26.23
Neither	13	21.31	1	1.64	14	22.95
Total	43	70.49	18	29.51	61	100.00

Chi-square value = 10.903
p = .004
Df = 2
Sample size = 61

A Chi Square analysis of the relationship between database in use and willingness to use ABI/INFORM again was highly significant (Chi Square = 8.255; p = .016). One person (1 respondent or 1.59% each) using Wilson Business Abstracts would use it again while one person (1 respondent or 1.59% each) would not use Wilson again. It may be that both of these two respondents used only the Wilson Business Abstracts database. Significantly

Table 13
Relationship between Database in Use by Willingness to Use ABI/INFORM Again

Database in Use	Willingness to Use ABI/INFORM Again: Yes		No		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
ABI/INFORM	29	46.03	0	0.00	29	46.03
Wilson Business Abstracts	1	1.59	1	1.59	2	3.17
Both	28	44.44	4	6.35	32	50.79
Total	58	92.06	5	7.94	63	100.00

Chi-square value = 8.255
p = .016
Df = 2
Sample size = 63

more people using both databases (58 respondents or 92.06%) would be more willing to use ABI/INFORM again (see Table 13).

The Chi Square analysis on the variables frequency of CD-ROM use and user's major determined that a significant relationship exists between these two variables (Chi Square = 9.540; p = .023). The majority of all respondents (42 or 63.64%) including business majors and other majors use CD-ROM products less than once per week. It was interesting to note that more respondents (8 or 12.12%) use the CD-ROM products 4 or more times per week than those (3 or 4.55%) who use the products 2-3 times per week (see Table 14).

The Chi Square analysis of the relationship between ABI/INFORM's response time and perception of user experience was significant (Chi Square =

Table 14

Relationship between Frequency of CD-ROM Use by User's Major

Frequency of CD-ROM Use	User's Major: Business		Other		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Less than Once per Week	34	51.52	8	12.12	42	63.64
Once per Week	7	10.61	6	9.09	13	19.70
2-3 times per Week	1	1.52	2	3.03	3	4.55
4 or More times per Week	3	4.55	5	7.58	8	12.12
Total	45	68.18	21	31.82	66	100.00

Chi-square value = 9.540
p = .023
Df = 3
Sample size = 66

10.088; p = .039). Users who felt they have beginner level experience did not have the same expectations as the users who perceive themselves as having an experienced level of CD-ROM use. The majority of users with beginner level experience (17 respondents or 26.15%) said the CD-ROM response time was adequate. None of the users with experienced levels (0 respondents or 0.00%) felt that the response time was fast while 4 of the beginner level respondents (6.15%) felt that the response time of ABI/INFORM was fast (see Table 15).

When the Chi Square test was used to analyze the variables purpose for CD-ROM use and perception of user experience, it was discovered that a

Table 15

Relationship between ABI/INFORM's Response Time by Perception of User Experience

ABI/INFORM's Response Time	Perception of User Experience: Beginner		Moderate		Experienced		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Slow	3	4.62	10	15.38	9	13.85	22	33.85
Adequate	17	26.15	12	18.46	7	10.77	36	55.38
Fast	4	6.15	3	4.62	0	0.00	7	10.77
Total	24	36.92	25	38.46	16	24.62	65	100.00

Chi-square value = 10.903

p = .004

Df = 2

Sample size = 61

significant relationship exists between these two variables (Chi Square = 22.711; p = .004). Users whose purpose was to do graduate research (3 respondents or 4.55%) were nearly evenly distributed between beginner (4 respondents or 7.14%) and moderate (5 respondents or 8.93%) levels of experience with one respondent (1.79%) recording experienced level of CD-ROM use. Respondents doing faculty research (2 respondents or 3.57%; 1 respondent or 1.79%) felt they are either moderate or experienced level users. Users who were searching for job information (4 respondents or 7.14%) were evenly distributed between beginner and moderate experience (2 respondents or 3.57% each) (see Table 16).

A Chi Square analysis of the relationship between purpose for CD-ROM use and user status was discovered to be highly significant (Chi Square =

Table 16

Relationship between Purpose for CD-ROM Use by Perception of User Experience

Purpose for CD-ROM Use	Perception of User Experience: Beginner		Moderate		Experienced		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Class Assignment	18	32.14	15	26.79	3	5.36	36	64.29
Graduate Research	4	7.14	5	8.93	1	1.79	10	17.86
Faculty Research	0	0.00	2	3.57	1	1.79	3	5.36
Job Information	2	3.57	2	3.57	0	0.00	4	7.14
Other	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	5.36	3	5.36
Total	24	42.86	24	42.86	8	14.29	56	100.00

Chi-square value = 22.711
p = .004
Df = 8
Sample size = 56

74.116; p = .000). While the overwhelming majority of undergraduate users (29 respondents or 50.88%) were using the CD-ROM to do a class assignment; three undergraduates (5.26%) were searching for job information. Most graduates (10 respondents or 17.54%) were doing graduate research, several (7 respondents or 12.28%) were working on class assignments, one (1.75%) was doing faculty research, and 2 respondents (3.51%) were using the CD-ROM for other purposes (see Table 17).

Table 17

Relationship between Purpose for CD-ROM Use by User Status

Purpose for CD-ROM Use	User Status: Undergraduate		Graduate		Faculty		Other		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Class Assignment	29	50.88	7	12.28	0	0.00	1	1.75	37	64.91
Graduate Research	0	0.00	10	17.54	0	0.00	0	0.00	10	17.54
Faculty / Research	0	0.00	1	1.75	2	3.51	0	0.00	3	5.26
Job Information	3	5.26	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.75	4	7.02
Other	0	0.00	2	3.51	0	0.00	1	1.75	3	5.26
Total	32	56.14	20	35.09	2	3.51	3	5.26	57	100.00

Chi-square value = 74.116

p = .000

Df = 12

Sample size = 57

CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION

ABI/INFORM and Wilson Business Abstracts were compared in order to determine user preference. Users completed a questionnaire stating their opinions about their preference of commands and screen. Then the questionnaires were statistically analyzed.

A very large percentage of respondents (77.6%) had used the ABI/INFORM database before while only 28.4% had used the Wilson Business Abstracts database before. Being more familiar and comfortable with ABI/INFORM may be the reason for ABI/INFORM preference. Users were asked if they had used the Periodical Abstracts CD-ROM database that is also a UMI product. Only 16.4% of respondents said that they had used all three databases: ABI/INFORM, Periodical Abstracts, and Wilson Business Abstracts. All respondents who had used Wilson Business Abstracts had also used ABI/INFORM before but the reverse was not true.

Six respondents (9.0%) specifically stated a preference for ABI/INFORM in their comments while only two (3%) stated a preference for Wilson Business Abstracts. Two users (3%) said that they liked both databases. Several respondents mentioned that ABI/INFORM has more complete abstracts or is more complete overall than Wilson Business Abstracts. There were several complaints about the time needed to start the system and that response time is slow during peak times. Three users (4.5%) said that the library needs more terminals for CD-ROM searching.

Respondents spent more time on the ABI/INFORM database. It is uncertain whether this is due to familiarity with the database, specific reference by an instructor or friend to the database, or a definite preference for

ABI/INFORM. Judging from the responses it seems that familiarity has more to do with user preference than actual hands-on experience. Users who did use both databases seem to like both products and said that they would use both CD-ROM products again.

Despite the specific request that respondents use both ABI/INFORM and Wilson Business Abstracts databases, many respondents only used ABI/INFORM. This was most difficult problem with the study. This phenomenon may be due to time constraints, lack of interest or misunderstanding that the survey was a comparison and thus the use of both databases was necessary. Many respondents circled ABI/INFORM in question eight of the survey (which asked what database they would be using) even if they used both databases. Perhaps this question needed to be made more clear. Many users did not plan initially to try both databases for locating journal articles because they either did not know about the Wilson Business Abstracts database or did not feel it would be helpful to them. It would have been more of a comparative study if more respondents had used and actively compared the two business CD-ROMs.

There are significantly more periodicals indexed in ABI/INFORM and the records are more complete. However, Wilson does have unique titles and often provides citations that are not available on ABI/INFORM, particularly on the CD-ROM version with limited year coverage. ABI/INFORM seems to be the preferred database overall, particularly if only one business database is available.

APPENDIX A

ABI/INFORM AND WILSON BUSINESS ABSTRACTS: A COMPARISON.

All responses will be kept confidential and anonymous. There is no penalty for withdrawal or decision not to participate. If you have any questions please contact me, Sheri Stout, graduate student, at (216) 672-7410 or Dr. Lois Butlar, my advisor, at (216) 672-2782.

For questions concerning research at Kent State University contact Dr. Eugene Wenninger, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, at (216) 672-2070. This study compares user response to the two business CD-ROMs in order to evaluate them.

ABI/INFORM AND WILSON BUSINESS ABSTRACTS: A COMPARISON

Please circle your answers unless otherwise noted.

1. Male Female

2. Undergraduate Graduate Staff Faculty Other (please specify)_____

3. Are you a business major? Yes No

4. Have you used a CD-ROM before? Yes No Don't Know

5. If so which one(s)? ABI/INFORM, CINAHL, ERIC, MLA Bibliography, Periodical Abstracts, PsycLit, Sociofile, Wilson Business Abstracts, Other(s)_____

6. How often do you use these products?
Less than once a week Once a week 2-3 times 4 or more times

7. What level of experience do you feel you have?
beginner moderate experienced

8. Are you using ABI/INFORM and/or Wilson Business Abstracts?
ABI/INFORM Wilson Business Abstracts Both Neither

9. How did you find out about ABI/INFORM Index and Wilson Business Abstracts? Class Friend Librarian Library Guide
Other (please specify)_____

10. Why are you using ABI/INFORM Index and/or Wilson Business Abstracts? Class assignment Graduate Research Faculty Research Job Information Other(please explain)_____

11. Did you use the same keywords/terms on ABI/INFORM and Wilson Business Abstracts? Yes No Don't Know

12. Which is easier to read?
ABI/INFORM Wilson Business Abstracts Neither

13. Were the commands of one product easier to understand?
ABI/INFORM Wilson Business Abstracts
Neither (OVER)

14. Do you feel you need training?
ABI/INFORM: Yes No Wilson Business Abstracts: Yes No

15. Did you use the help screen(s)?
ABI/INFORM: Yes No Wilson Business Abstracts: Yes No

16. Did you ask for assistance for either product?
ABI/INFORM: Yes No Wilson Business Abstracts: Yes No

17. How long were you on ABI/INFORM?
less than 15 minutes 15-30 45-60 longer than 60

18. How long were you on Wilson Business Abstracts?
less than 15 minutes 15-30 45-60 longer than 60

19. How was the response time for ABI/INFORM?
slow adequate fast

20. How was the response time for Wilson Business Abstracts?
slow adequate fast

21. Did you find articles on your topic?
ABI/INFORM: Yes No Wilson Business Abstracts: Yes No

22. Would you use ABI/INFORM or Wilson Business Abstracts again?
ABI/INFORM: Yes No Wilson Business Abstracts: Yes No

23. Do you have any suggestions for improving ABI/INFORM and/or Wilson Business Abstracts?_____
_____

24. Comments_____
_____
_____

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey. All answers are confidential. Please place survey in box at reference desk or give to a reference librarian.

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